

14 June 2007

Personal Statement on Sirius-XM Merger

I have been a subscriber to XM Satellite Radio for more than two years. The audio service (primarily the college/indie-rock station XMU) has provided me with a wide library of new and up-and-coming musicians. It is because of this opportunity granted to these musicians that I am strongly opposed to the pending merger.

As far as I can tell, one of the benefits of having two separate entities is that they allow more opportunities for up-and-coming musicians to have their material exposed. Some may have to settle for having their material exposed on one service or the other, but they still stand a chance of being heard.

According to a February 20, 2007, Wall Street Journal article, one of the proposed post-merger actions to be taken is to take two channels with very similar formats and merge them into a single channel. That means that XMU and the Sirius counterpart, Left of Center, would merge into a single channel that plays indie rock.

The problem I see with this action is that it would reduce the chances of up-and-coming musicians to get exposure. This is certainly the case in terrestrial radio with Clear Channel owning so many stations in the U.S. and having control over what music is played in most markets.

Other concerns that I have over the merger can be found in a letter I sent to USA Today that was published in February (http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/02/fight_the_merge.html). I am urging the FCC, as well as the Justice Department and the Commerce and Judiciary Committees in the House and the Senate, to prevent the merger from happening.

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